

THE MOUTHPIECE

The job roll reads like a rogue's gallery so you were thoroughly prepared to strike out on any one of the following:

- 1) you were a WASP in a hive full of black-eyed peas and enchiladas
- 2) you were younger than any of them
- 3) you were their foreman (technically designated as Small Animal Section Head, and you'd never shake that title no matter how often you'd tell people: "I'm foreman here and a Certified Laboratory Animal Technician with the American Association of Laboratory Animal Science.")

First day on the job you magnanimously go to the men, who are having lunch in their cars in a shaded parking area adjacent to the covered boardwalks which are a typical component of old WWII hospital barracks. You introduce yourself, trying to control your voice, praying that the adolescent squeak which often erupts from your 22 year old throat won't finish you off on the spot.

You needn't have worried. Abraham, who, you've been informed, has a penchant for burglarizing office equipment, has you by the throat and is brandishing an 8" hunting knife whipped out from the sheath on his hip. "What's that, honky, you say 'bout my schedule?"

Somehow, despite the problematic wet spot in your crotch area, your voice actually saves you for once: "Cool it, man! You don't got-ta do nothing -- but I've gotta way, where workin' together, we can beat the system." If brotherhood is founded on nothing else, then beating the system is its Golden Rule. The others crowd in -- instinctively they know when they've found a mouthpiece. So for

423.00 a month to start, first day on the job: you are not handed your balls on a dog's shit pan.